

## BRIEFS

### STATE FOSTER CARE WORKERS WARNED

CHICAGO (BP) — Foster care workers in Illinois can now be terminated if they don't encourage homosexual and transgender youth to express and explore their chosen gender identity and sexual orientation, according to a new directive from the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. Agency director George Sheldon said, "LGBTQ youth have the right to be treated equally, to express their gender identity and to have the choice to be open or private about their sexual orientation, gender expression and gender identity. They need to feel free to be who they are."

### TRUMP BUDGET LIFTS ABSTINENCE FUNDING

WASHINGTON (BP) — U.S. President Donald Trump's proposed 2018 federal budget recently submitted to the U.S. Congress would double the percentage of sex education funds devoted to abstinence-based approaches. Of the approximately one billion dollars in federal funding for sex education annually, about 10% currently goes to programs that advocate delaying sexual activity. The figure will increase to 20% if Congress adopts Trump's budget, said Valerie Huber, president and CEO of Ascend.

### CP PHOENIX EXHIBIT INCLUDES SPEAKERS

PHOENIX (BP) — Insights into preaching, church planting, adoption, and foster care are some of the features of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Cooperative Program booth at the SBC 2017 annual meeting June 13-14 in Phoenix. Southern Baptist pastors, SBC entity heads, and other leaders will cover a broad array of topics at the booth opening June 12 at approximately 8:30 a.m. in advance of the annual meeting and continuing through 11:30 a.m. June 14. The presentations collectively demonstrate the cooperation the Southern Baptist family enjoys in missions and ministry, said Ashley Clayton, SBC Executive Committee vice president.

## Sudan releases jailed pastor, believer



## Campaign to destroy places of worship continues unabated

KHARTOUM, Sudan (BP) — A pastor and another Christian unjustly imprisoned in Muslim-dominated Sudan and feared to be in danger of their lives, are free after presidential pardons, with their release coming just days after the government destroyed the last Christian place of worship in Soba al Aradi, a suburb of the capital Khartoum.

The May 11 release of Sudan Church of Christ (SCOC) pastor Hassan Abdelrahman Tawor of Omdurman and Christian activist Abdulmomen Abdumawla of Darfur ended 10-year prison sentences the two had been serving since December, 2015.

The men were wrongly accused of espionage, causing hatred among communities, and spreading false information, Morning Star News reported.

In what is considered a systematic attack on Christian churches, the government on May 7 destroyed the Sudanese

Church of Christ in Soba al Aradi. It was the latest in a string of 12 churches the government has demolished in the community since 2011, Morning Star News reported May 8.

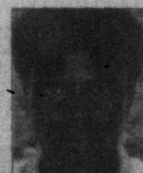
The loss of the church, established in 1989 and most recently used by three congregations, leaves no place for Christians to worship in the town.

International religious liberty advocates, including Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), Middle East Concern (MEC), and Jubilee Campaign, praised God for the release of Tawor and Abdumawla. The groups continue to advocate for Christians in Sudan who have been increasingly persecuted since the 2011 secession of

South Sudan.

"We welcome the release of Reverend [Abdelrahman] and Mr. Abdumawla, and are pleased they are finally able to

see SUDAN on p. 6



ABDUMAWLA



TAWOR

## LGBT protestors plan SBC disruption

PHOENIX (BP and local reports) — An advocacy group seeking to have homosexuality and transgenderism "removed from the sin list" has announced plans to "politely disrupt" the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting June 13-14 in Phoenix.

Faith in America (FIA) hopes to persuade the nation's largest Protestant denomination to change its interpretation of Scripture, the group said in a press release that accused the SBC of marginalizing and harming lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) children in particular by discouraging sexual relationships outside of marriage between a man and a woman.

FIA requested a Phoenix meeting with SBC leaders, who

offered instead to receive FIA representatives in Nashville after the Phoenix convention because the schedule is completed for the Phoenix meeting.

Frank Page, president of the SBC Executive Committee in Nashville, said offering to meet with FIA representatives in Nashville is not an indication of compromise but rather an opportunity to share the Gospel.

"I am always delighted to share the truths of the Gospel with anyone who wishes to meet with me. Scripture predicts a time when people will stray from biblical truth. We are saddened when we encounter erroneous teaching and pray for a return to biblical faithfulness," he said.

FIA announced details of its Phoenix plans in a May 31 press

release. Medical professionals, clergy, homosexual country music performer Ty Herndon, founders of the Tyler Clementi Foundation, and others plan to engage SBC messengers in conversations about the plight of LGBT children, FIA said.

Billboard advertising throughout Phoenix will proclaim FIA messages and "a robust social media campaign" will take place full-time at the annual meeting, FIA said.

"This is an historic moment and we, at Faith in America, are taking action," FIA Co-founder and Co-chair Mitchell Gold said in the press release. "This is not about conflict and division. It is about speaking the truth, and standing up for our kids and

see DISRUPTION on p. 7

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## From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

### Insanity repeated

The just-released annual report of Planned Parenthood Federation of America reveals that the nation's most prolific abortion provider enjoyed an increase in the number of abortions performed last year. Hand-in-hand with that was an equally impressive increase in total revenue to \$1.4 billion—including nearly \$355 million in taxpayer funds.

One of the most perverse arguments put forth by the pro-abortion lobby both in this state and nationally is that without the easy availability of legal abortion during all nine months of pregnancy, women will naturally revert to being victims of unsanitary and unsafe "back alley" abortions like in the old, desperate days. Legalized abortion, so they say, has liberated women from such dangerous conditions and brought on a new era of safe and sanitary health care for them in modern, sterile clinics.

Really? These folks must have been living for quite some time in a cave somewhere.

Physician Kermit Gosnell ran a state-licensed abortion clinic in a poor neighborhood of Philadelphia, Pa. (It was not a Planned Parenthood clinic.)

The New York Times quoted Sherry Thomas, a one-time patient at Gosnell's clinic: "It was like walking into a nightmare," she said. "Everyone was apathetic, no one was making sense. People were slumped over and waiting in line like they were going into a soup kitchen."

A grand jury investigation reported that federal agents conducting a drug raid on the clinic found squalid conditions that included a dirty turtle tank in the lobby, blood and urine on the floors, and even cat excrement on stairs.

Semiconscious women scheduled for abortions were moaning in the waiting room or the recovery room, where they sat on dirty recliners covered with blood-stained blankets," the grand jury report stated.

The "walk in the park," as Gosnell described Thomas' pending abortion to her, didn't turn out so well, according to the Times article.

"Ms. Thomas remembers waking up, soaked in her own blood and feeling scared. People were moving around her, trying to put her in an ambulance. Her uterus had been punctured. She was rushed to the hospital, where she was given a partial hysterectomy."

"When I woke up I thought, 'I might die today,'" Ms. Thomas said. Dr. Gosnell offered her \$500, she said, possibly in an effort to avert a lawsuit. She had paid \$800 for the abortion."

Diane Derzis, who owns the only abortion clinic in Mississippi on State Street in Jackson, in 2012 was forced by Alabama health officials to shut down a sister clinic in Birmingham due to manifold problems in that legally-licensed facility.

In a scathing, 76-page report compiled by the Alabama Department of Public Health after three of Derzis' clinic patients had to be rushed by ambulance to local hospitals in one day, those health officials found among many violations:

- Clinic staff was not properly trained in patient care.

- No documentation that abortionists brought in by Derzis to perform procedures in the Birmingham clinic were even qualified to do so under Alabama laws and regulations.

- Derzis' doctors submitted documentation for patient care that was simply false.

- Lack of documentation on medications administered and altered notations on patients' charts.

- Use of equipment with expired inspection dates or no inspection dates at all.

- Failure of the on-call nurse to return patients' calls about complications, and failure to notify clinic physicians of patient problems.

The question must be asked, does Derzis manage her Mississippi clinic any better?

Yes, legal abortion and licensed clinics have resulted in great advancements for American women, haven't they? Society is much better with legalized abortion, aren't we?

So, when are we going to learn the obvious truth behind the old axiom, that repeating the same mistakes and expecting a better outcome the next time is the very definition of insanity?

## A pivot foot for the Gospel

I was introduced to the idea of a pivot foot not on a basketball court but in a seminary classroom when a counseling professor used the term as an illustration. Similar to basketball players, he wanted his students to keep one foot stationary in their biblical convictions, yet swivel open in respect to counselors who held opposing viewpoints.

A seed was planted within me that day. Over time, with nurturing by the Holy Spirit, the illustration of that basketball move blossomed into an unexpected work of humility and joy in my life. God has given me the grace to love and accept Christians with whom I don't agree on every point of theology or practice.

The landscape of Southern Baptists currently consists of believers grounded in the truth of the Gospel, yet divided on various issues. Our denomination could benefit by developing a pivot foot. Here are four reasons why.

■ **To promote unity within the body of Christ.** Galatians 3:28 states that believers come from different races, social statuses, and genders, but in Christ we are one. We also make distinctions among ourselves based on theological convictions, church methodology, or views of Christian culture and conduct. Convinced our own preferences are right, we feel justified when we quietly yet scornfully dismiss our brothers and sisters in Christ who disagree.

However, we would do well to remember our equal standing. Proponents of both groups are sinners raised to life in Christ. The Gospel levels us, so let's use our pivot foot to find unity within the body of Christ.

■ **For the good of unbelievers.** The development of a Christian pivot foot ironically benefits unbelievers. In Jesus' high priestly prayer in John 17, He petitions the Father four times for the unity of His people (vs. 11, 21-23). One motivation is love for the lost. Jesus concludes His request in verse 21 with: "...so that the world may believe You have sent me."

How does unity among Christians bring the lost to believe Jesus is God in the flesh? When we unite, our focus moves outward toward the hurting instead of inward on ourselves. We begin to see needs we previously missed. Together, we offer love in the form of deeds and truth. They see our good works and give glory to God. Let's pivot toward one another for the sake of the lost.



### Guest opinion

with Courtney L. Moore

■ **To demonstrate humility.** Pride loves being right. Pride also loves self while humility puts others first. As we humbly extend our pivot foot, we make room for those with whom we disagree. It takes humility to set aside for the sake of someone else what we deem as unequivocally right. Could we begin to question ourselves some, remembering our own fallibility? Maybe our right findings aren't as impenetrable as we thought and even if they are, could we lower our pride in them to make room for others to come close?

Jesus humbly set aside His divine rights for a time for the sake of others (Philippians 2:5-8). Let's identify with Christ and model His humility by developing a pivot foot.

■ **For the opportunity to show love.** It's only natural to love people just like ourselves. Even the Gentiles do this (Matthew 5:46) but Christ-like love intentionally pivots toward opponents for their good, even when the flesh prefers to turn away. Consider how Jesus loves and welcomes people unlike Himself. The Infinite moves toward the finite. The Self-Sufficient invites the dependent near. The Holy One draws sinners to Himself. The foundation of Jesus' ministry was a radical, self-less love.

Let's be more than just open to these opportunities. May we cheerfully pursue those with whom we differ and even surprise them by our love and affirmation.

We Southern Baptists may not be known for our basketball skills, but I pray these motivations would encourage us to cultivate a pivot foot toward one another that has far-reaching effects.

Moore, online at courtneymoore.com, is the mother of two sons and member of PineLake Church in Brandon where her husband Brent is adult groups pastor. This commentary first appeared on Baptist Press, and has been edited here for style and length.

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# Month of Ramadan in full swing around globe

**RICHMOND, Va. (BP and local reports)** — Imagine not taking in food or drink during daylight hours for 28 days straight, a Muslim practice during Ramadan that is directly linked to a person's standing in society or stature with their god Allah.

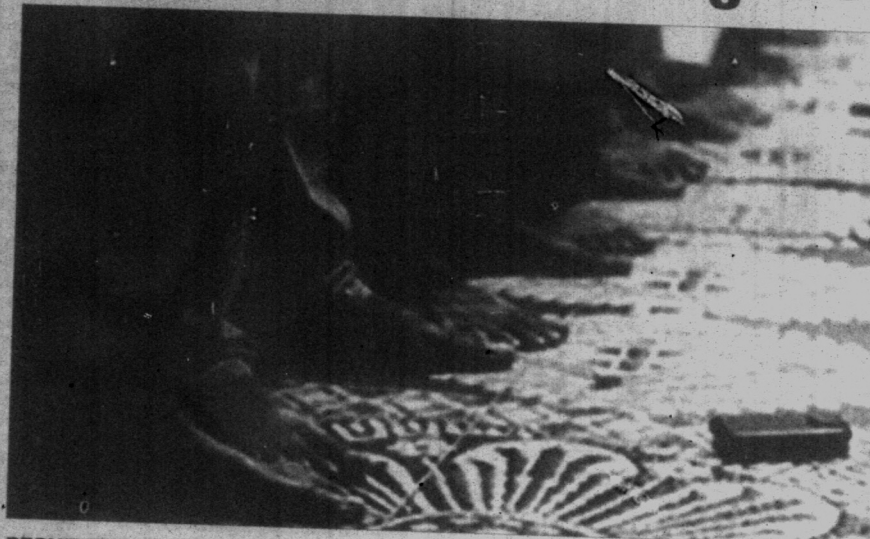
The month of Ramadan is a time when every follower of Islam is encouraged — and in some cases required — to exercise many forms of self-restraint in an effort to be aware of Allah and think about how they should best worship him.

Islamist extremists, who are radical elements that claim the religion for themselves, use Ramadan to call for the killing of Christians and other "infidels."

An observant Muslim country during this time consists of restaurants closed during daylight hours. Refrigerated boxes of soft drinks found on the sidewalk on most streets are padlocked. Cigarette vendors are missing from the daily street traffic. Until sunset approaches and dinner preparations can finally be made, many normal patterns of life are completely halted.

The fasting associated with Ramadan, which is derived from Muslims' lunar calendar and will run this year from May 26 - June 25, is one of five orthodox practices that define Islamic culture and religion and are known as the Five Pillars of Islam. Muslims who do not observe the fast are marked as not serious about their religion. The focus of Ramadan is not primarily abstinence or fasting but a concentration of a Muslim's energy and mind on an awareness of their god and life as a pious worshipper.

"Taqua, or awareness of their god, is cultivated in several ways during Ramadan. The first way is by fasting. When the thought of food, drink, or cigarettes comes to mind, people are directed to think on the Muslim god and meditate on their responsibility to please him.



**REQUIRED** — Muslim men prepare for mandatory daily prayers to their god Allah at the Koumassi mosque in the west Africa city of Abidjan in the country of Côte d'Ivoire, before breaking a fast during the holy month of Ramadan. Muslim men and women are not allowed to pray together. (BP photo courtesy of IMB)

A second form of taqua is taking finances that would have been used during the day to buy food and giving that money to the poor. Some Muslims provide meals after the sun sets for a larger group than just their own family. Frequently in Muslim communities, there are public tables and at sunset passersby are invited to the fitir — the breaking of the daily fast.

A third way in which Muslims seek to experience heightened consciousness of their god is through public readings and recitations of the Qur'an (Koran) during the late evening hours when families are together.

## Time to pray

The month of Ramadan is a time when Muslims are very aware of dreams and visions. They believe dreams are a direct way that their god chooses to

reveal himself to people. During this time of heightened spiritual focus, Muslims are often seeking a special message or revelation from their god.

As Christians have prayed earnestly for their Muslim neighbors and friends during this season, the Christians hear reports of dreams and visions in which Jesus appears to these Muslim friends and draws them to Himself. In fact, it is rare to meet Muslim-background believers who have come to Christ without an experience of this nature.

During Ramadan when Muslims are particularly aware of their spiritual hunger, barriers to acceptance of the Gospel seem to be most effectively breached when they dream of Jesus or of a Christian who has a life-giving message to relate to them.

The reality is that every day, inside or outside of Ramadan, Muslims are dying without Jesus.

Some have been presented with the truth of the Gospel and have rejected it, while others have not had the opportunity to respond to the Good News.

Christians should grasp this sobering truth and view this month of Muslims' heightened spiritual awareness as a time to earnestly entreat the true heavenly Father to soften their hearts to the message of salvation by grace through faith in Christ.

Christians should also pray for an increase in Christian evangelical presence in Muslim communities across the globe.

## Time to engage

A Muslim's elevated sensitivity to spiritual matters during Ramadan usually creates an open atmosphere for discussions with Christian friends. During this season Christians are often invited to share an

iftar evening meal with their Muslim friends. In this setting, spiritual discussions are frequently welcomed and encouraged by the Muslim hosts.

The month of Ramadan is also an excellent opportunity for Christians to invite their Muslim friends to an evening meal to give return hospitality, and to have dialogues on spiritual matters.

Two questions that could kick-start a spiritual conversation with Muslim friends during Ramadan are:

■ "Fasting during Ramadan seems to be both a personal and corporate experience. Can you help me understand some of the most meaningful aspects of this month for you and your community?"

■ "As a Muslim, what do you mean by taqua?"

Questions like these aim to move beyond the physical aspects of the fast to discover how Muslim friends respond to God in daily life.

Listening carefully and prayerfully to their answer will often encourage them to be more open to hear how Christians seek to walk with God daily in the Word and the Spirit.

Christians can use Ramadan to earnestly share the true God on behalf of the more than 1.6 billion followers of Islam around the world. Ask God to soften their hearts to the Gospel and send more laborers into the field to engage them with the truth of Christ.

## Get involved

For revealing information on attitudes toward Christianity in individual Muslim-dominated countries and how to pray for the residents of those countries, visit [imb.org/2017/03/20/restricting-religious-freedom-country-country-analysis-infographic/](http://imb.org/2017/03/20/restricting-religious-freedom-country-country-analysis-infographic/)

To explore ways to become engaged in missions to reach Muslims around the world, visit [imb.org/opportunity-finder/](http://imb.org/opportunity-finder/).

# Gallup: America drifting left at increasing pace

**NASHVILLE (BP and local reports)** — A newly-released Gallup poll indicates Americans are more left-leaning than ever on 10 of 19 moral issues.

The results were called "humbling" and "chastening" by a Southern Baptist Convention seminary president, while a Fordham University ethicist critiqued the poll as "deeply misleading" for suggesting moral permissiveness is limited to liberals.

In its annual Values and Beliefs survey, the Gallup polling organization found that record percentages of U.S. adults believe it is morally acceptable to use birth control (91%),

get divorced (73%), engage in opposite-gender sexual acts outside marriage (69%), engage in same sex sexual acts (63%), have a baby outside of marriage (62%), commit physician-assisted suicide (57%), view pornography (36%), and practice polygamy (17%).

The only two practices to register record low moral approval were capital punishment (58%) and medical testing on animals (51%).

According to a May 11 Gallup news release, since the inception of the Values and Beliefs poll in 2001, researchers have noted "meaningful change in a liberal direction" on 13 of the 19 issues

from this year's survey. Gallup added that "no issues show meaningful change toward more traditionally conservative positions."

Approval of same sex sexual acts has seen the greatest jump in approval, increasing 23 percentage points over the years to its current approval rating. The second greatest approval increase has occurred for having a baby outside marriage — a 17 percentage point jump.

Sex between an unmarried man and woman has seen a 16 percentage point increase in approval, and divorce showed a 14 percentage point increase.

The 43% approval of abortion is virtually unchanged since

2001, as are nine percent approval of extramarital affairs and 65% approval of gambling.

Seven of the eight practices to register record-tying or record-setting approval this year are condemned in the Baptist Faith and Message (BFM), either directly or by implication. Birth control is the only one not mentioned, though the BFM calls children "a blessing and heritage from the Lord."

A May 15 op-ed commentary by Fordham University ethicist Charles Camosy published by the Catholic news agency Crux critiqued Gallup's release for "radically simplify[ing] a complex nexus of beliefs and values."

Fordham University is located in New York City and affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church.

Gallup's "slapping moral positions with liberal or conservative is problematic," Camosy wrote.

As an example, he claimed some liberal feminists oppose pornography while research suggests conservatives may consume more porn than liberals. Similarly, some traditionally liberal states like Massachusetts, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Maryland "have rejected" physician-assisted suicide while some conservative libertarian states in the west have legalized it, he wrote.

Through my years of life and especially ministry, I have attended many funerals. In fact, as a pastor and then serving Mississippi Baptists these past years, I have found myself on many days unable to attend some funerals because I already have a commitment to speak at or attend another funeral. Funerals are important parts of society because in some ways they allow us to affirm and reaffirm that life is really important and the person who passed away was important.

The great old preacher, pastor, professor, and servant of the Lord, C. Z. Holland, used to say that one of the things he really wished he could do was preach his own funeral. He would go on to say that we really have things turned around in our society, that we need to have a funeral while people are still alive. Why? One, to see who comes. Two, to hear what they have to say. Three, so that you would better know how to fill out your will. While some people don't see any need and see it as a waste of time to attend a funeral, truth is that that is not the truth. It is a sad thing when no one comes to a funeral.

While I was a pastor on the Coast, a funeral home called me and asked if I would do a funeral. It was going to be a simple graveside service. It was the funeral of a man who had passed away and had no family. No one had made the arrangements and they were just struggling to find someone who could come and make some remarks before the burial. I told them that I would be glad to, and when the time came I went with the funeral directors to the cemetery. As we gathered at the appointed time, we waited to see if anyone else would come. None did — no family, friends, work associates. No one was there except me and the funeral directors and the men who had prepared the grave.

We allowed the clock to go a little past time to see if anybody would finally show up. Sure enough, a car came our way, stopped, and a man got out. He walked over to where we were and asked if this was the funeral for and called the man's name. We said yes and he said, "Well, I'm not sure if this is the man that



## Why attend funerals?

I know." He then told us they occasionally would run into each other at the bar late in the afternoon and have a drink together. He wasn't sure if even that was his name, but thought it might be his semi-acquaintance. The funeral directors were accommodating to him and opened the casket so he could check. He leaned over, looked at the man, and said yes, that was the man with whom he occasionally would talk. With little other comment while they were closing the casket, he walked away, got in his car, and drove off. Once again, there were only the funeral home employees and me to start the service. How sad that no one knew and no one really cared that a man was here and he was gone.

I remember when one of my fine deacons came to me and said, "You know, I'm fairly flexible in my work and if you ever need some additional people to come to a service so that it will look better, I'm available though I may not even know them." Occasionally I would have a funeral and would ask him, "If you can, just drop in." He would — often if I asked him but more often when I didn't say a thing. He just believed it was thoughtful to express care and concern for the family of the deceased. I agree.

I'm writing this article just to say that you ought to go to every funeral you hear about taking place in your community or area, but especially when there is a connection with your church

or some aspect of your life. It's a meaningful thing for you to actually take the time to show up, to actually care, and to express your sympathy to the family. Why attend a funeral? The person who has passed away doesn't know you're there or care, but why should you attend? While I'm not suggesting that you ought to spend every day of your life going to funerals, I would suggest three good reasons why you ought to go to ones that are meaningful and closely connected to your life experiences.

**One — it is respectful.** Respect may not be something that has a lot of appreciation in our culture, but being respectful is still a significant thing. It has been my simple and personal observation that people who are respectful deserve respect. People who fail to put that piece of significant life experience into their daily walk miss out on a bunch. It's not just about being respectful to the person who died. You can easily think, well, he or she doesn't even know I'm here, but the respect you show for the person means a great deal to family and friends and people who may know them a whole lot better than you and they respect them. Somehow it has a way of bleeding into your life and them having respect for you.

**Two — it is revealing.** When I say going to a funeral is revealing, I mean oftentimes a celebration of life and especially a Christian funeral focuses on

the deceased's relationship to the Lord and those who have been significant in his or her life, family, and relationships. Many times you will hear things you had forgotten — achievements and unknown accomplishments — and suddenly you recognize that over a period of decades that her or she lived, his or her life had an impact far beyond anything you remember. It is revealing.

I remember a man when I was a young pastor who was late in his retirement years. He would go on to be with the Lord while I was his pastor. Only at his death did I discover what an incredible career he had in the military, what an amazing guy he was, and what he had accomplished and done not just in the military but throughout his life. The time he spent in a prison camp that he never talked to me about. The recognition and achievements he had in business that were so distant to him when I knew him and that he never mentioned. He meant a lot to me but it involved none of those things. At his funeral, while I already thought he was a great person, I realized that I had for a few minutes walked down the pathway of life with a truly incredible man.

**Three — it is a reminder.** You and I, all of us, are moving toward a day like that in our own existence. Life will be over on this planet but will continue in a world to come in the presence of Jesus for His children. His Christian followers. Just remember: people will gather one day to think about you and your life and the significance of it and what kind of life you lived for the Lord and they will be reminded that this life is a small capsule of time during which we are privileged to live, serve, and honor Christ. The late baseball great Yogi Berra was going to a funeral and somebody asked him why. He said, "Always go to other people's funerals, otherwise they won't come to yours." Yogi was on target but off track. It is a reminder that what we're going to do for Jesus, we need to do now because we're not going to have opportunities forever and forever.

The author can be contacted at [directions@mbcb.org](mailto:directions@mbcb.org).

## Just for the Record



William Isaac Bowlin, surrendered into the Gospel Ministry at **POPLAR SPRINGS CHURCH, MENDENHALL**. Pictured are Ted Bowlin (right), Isaac's father, presenting Isaac (left) with a study Bible. Isaac currently serves as Youth Minister at Oak Grove Church, Mendenhall, and will be a freshman at Mississippi College, Clinton this fall.



**CENTERVILLE CHURCH, CARROLL COUNTY**, ordained Zane Hodge Apr. 23. He is now serving as their pastor. He is shown with his wife Penny.



**INGOMAR CHURCH, UNION COUNTY**, recently held a baby dedication on May 14 with six children dedicated. Pictured with their parents are Emma Jane Edwards, Charly Faith Latsady, Selah Grace Rodgers, Elizabeth Anderson Taylor, Brentlee & Lexi Wiesing.

### In other Church News:

► **Trinity Church, Pearl**, is hosting the Southern Gospel Jubilee on June 10 at 6:00. The Matt Jones Group, the Adopted, Witness 4 Him, Family Tradition, Steve Reeves, Heavenly Journey, the Murphy's and Joy Card are scheduled to sing. Love offering.

► **Holly Church, Corinth**, is sponsoring a conference, Creation Not Confusion, by Creation Ministries International, which will deal with the existence of God, evolution, and suffering, June 11, 8:45 a.m. and 11 a.m.



What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

# HOUSE TOPS.

June 8, 2017

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's **Communication Services**.

Matthew 10:27 NAS



## MBASYC&O CONCERT TOUR DATES

### \*LOCATION CHANGE\*

\*Wednesday, June 14, 2017  
First Baptist Church, 6:30 p.m.  
200 E. Monticello St.  
Brookhaven, MS 39476  
(601) 788-9607

Thursday, June 15, 2017  
First Baptist Church, 6:30 p.m.  
300 N Cleveland Ave.  
Long Beach, MS 39560  
(228) 864-2584

Friday, June 16, 2017  
First Baptist Church, 6:30 p.m.  
1108 Robb St.  
Summit, MS 39666  
(601) 248-6268

Saturday, June 17, 2017  
Highland Colony Baptist Church, 6:00 p.m.  
1200 Highland Colony Pkwy.  
Ridgeland, MS 39157  
(601) 856-4031

Sunday, June 18, 2017  
First Baptist Church, 11:00 a.m.  
402 N Van Buren St.  
Carthage, MS 39051  
(601) 267-4583

First Baptist Church, 6:00 p.m.  
303 1st Ave.  
Amory, MS 38821  
(662) 256-7131

Monday, June 19, 2017  
First Baptist Church, 6:30 p.m.  
431 North State St.  
Jackson, MS 39201  
(601) 949-1900

## CELEBRATING THE SEASONS OF A LEADER'S LIFE



### BROADMOOR BAPTIST CHURCH

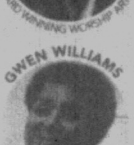
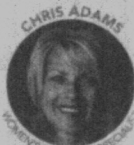
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August 7 FBC, Clinton

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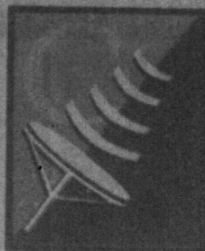
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Time: 9:00 a.m. to noon

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**July 11-15**

**Pearl River Community College, Poplarville**

**July 18-22**

**Blue Mountain College**

Church Music Department Events  
601-292-3267 - [cwtaylor@mbcb.org](mailto:cwtaylor@mbcb.org)

## **Sr. Adult Minister's Retreat**

Monday, August 14

**Rising Son Retreat Center**

444 Lake Road | French Camp, MS 39745

Time: 8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

**\*\*Keynote Speaker\*\*** Missy Buchanan

**\$25 Fee**

visit: [www.mbc.org/senior-adult-ministry](http://www.mbc.org/senior-adult-ministry)  
for a Registration Form

## **Small Church Ministry Workshops**

Workshops begin with supper at 6:00 p.m. and end at 8:45.

Thursday, August 3 - Duck Hill Baptist Church  
301 Main St. - Duck Hills, MS

Thursday, August 10 - First Baptist Church  
12513 MS - 57 - VanCleave, MS

Thursday, August 17 - Liberty Baptist Church  
5199 Lakeland Dr. - Flowood, MS

Thursday, August 24 - First Baptist Church  
328 Grand Ave. - Yazoo City, MS

These workshops will provide youth ministry training and an  
opportunity to discuss youth ministry as it relates to the smaller  
churches and churches that don't employ a full-time paid youth  
minister. A light supper will also be served to all participants.

To Register, visit:

[www.tinyurl.com/mbcb-smallchurchworkshops](http://www.tinyurl.com/mbcb-smallchurchworkshops)

Discipleship/Family Ministry Dept. - 601-292-3283



2017 Sunday School/Small Groups Trainings

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**August 26**

**First Baptist Church, Laurel**

**9 a.m. - noon**

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**Children - Candace Powell (LifeWay)**

**Students - Kenny Stanteen (FBC Clinton)**

**Adults - David Apple (LifeWay)**

Contact Sarah Lee in Sunday School/Small Groups at  
601-292-3291 or [slee@mbcb.org](mailto:slee@mbcb.org) for more info.

You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through  
us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.  
2 Corinthians 9:11

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2017 Stewardship Emphasis

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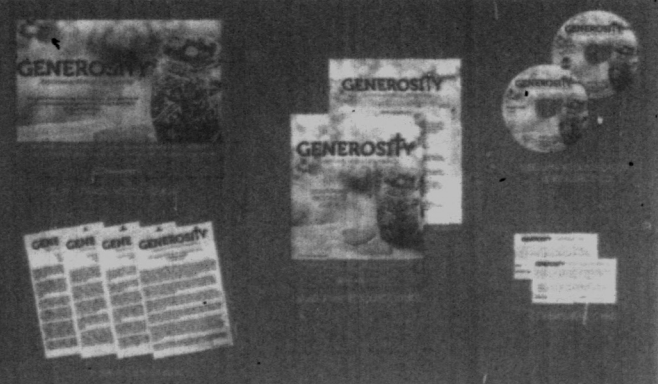
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Matthew 11:28-30

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Pray this day for...

*"praying at all times in the Spirit... To that end keep alert with perseverance, making supplication for all the saints..."*

*Ephesians 6:18 (ESV)*

Pray for: **Daniel & Claudia Hood**, missionaries ministering to North African & Middle Eastern Peoples through church planting & evangelism.

Pray for: **Millard Jones**, missionary ministering to European Peoples through student evangelism.

Pray for: **Susan Jones**, missionary ministering to East Asian Peoples through student evangelism.

Pray for: **Timothy & Rebecca Lightsey**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through strategy coordination, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Robert Mooney**, missionary ministering to European Peoples through Strategy Coordination.

Pray for: **Stephen & Svetlana Parish**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through strategy coordination, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Kevin & Brenda Peacock**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through theological education, outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Eugenia & Tracy Putnam**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through church planting.

Pray for: **John & Deborah Royals**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through regional office support, church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for: **Jonathan & Bethany Sharp**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through church planting & community outreach, encounter.

Pray for: **George & Geraldine Smith**, missionaries ministering to Sub-Saharan African Peoples through church planting, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Thomas & Janna Smith**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through church planting & regional office support.



Encourage an MK with a card!

Miss G.M. - 7/14/15  
Parents: C & L  
Restricted

Mr. Jackson - 8/03/08  
Parents: G & H  
Restricted

Mr. Evan Epps - 8/10/07  
Parents: Aaron & Tiffany  
American Peoples Group

Miss Elizabeth Clenney - 8/15/07  
Parents: Robert & Meghan  
Restricted

Mr. Hutchinson Adair - 8/16/07  
Parents: James & Mary Margaret  
Sub-Saharan African Peoples

Mr. E. - 8/16/09  
Restricted

Mr. Micah - 08/20/10  
Parents: J & C  
Restricted

Miss Braelyn Olivia - 8/22/13  
Parents: K & C  
Restricted

Mr. J.S. - 8/26/08  
Parents: S & M  
Last Frontier

Mr. Micah Clenney - 8/27/09  
Parents: Roberts & Meghan  
Restricted

To Be Sent July 14, 2017, by the WMU Office

**BAPTISTS**  
PLEASE NOTE THE TIMING: Thank you for your love and support of MKs by sending Birthday cards! Because of the mailing to other countries, there is a need to get cards sent a month ahead of birthday. As soon as the list is in the Baptist Record, please send the cards and not wait until a couple of weeks before the date of the birthday. It is posted two months ahead to give time to receive cards and then to mail them a month ahead of time to insure arrival around birthday. Again, thank you for being a blessing to so many with this ministry!  
NOTE: Church members may send a package of cards together; cards do not have to be sent individually to the WMU. Individual cards do not need postage stamps when sent as a package to MS WMU.  
FOR SECURITY: cards will be forwarded. Please send all c/o: MBCB WMU MK Birthdays, PO Box 530, Jackson MS 39205.  
Please include your return address on each card envelope. MKs and their parents may wish to send you an update or note of appreciation.

**HOUSE TOPS**

June 9 - June 22, 2017

Pray for: **Jeffery & Lisa Holman**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through strategy coordination.

Pray for: **Ronald & Beverly Holmes**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through church planting, outreach & evangelism.

**G17 Growing Churches Conference**  
Friday & Saturday, August 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup>, 2017

**Harrisburg Baptist Church**  
4675 Cliff Gookin Blvd.  
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"...for the training of the saints in the work of the ministry, to build up the body of Christ..."  
*Ephesians 4:12 (HCSB)*

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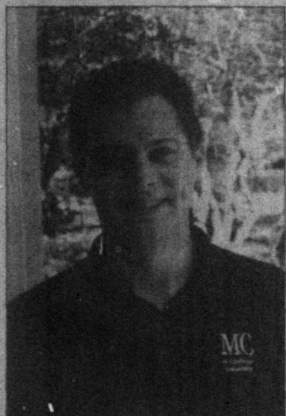
For more information, call Lee County Baptist Association  
at 601-566-1700 or visit [www.growingchurches.info](http://www.growingchurches.info)

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**National BNF Retreat**  
September 8-10  
**GARAYWA, Clinton**  
**WMU/WM | 601-292-3319**



## College News



**MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE** graduate Justin Graves serves as the new leader of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes at his alma mater. After six years as FCA director at Jones County Junior College in Ellisville, Graves went to work on the Clinton campus June 1. A 28-year-old Clinton resident, Graves is a 2010 MC graduate. He majored in Christian Studies and Philosophy and minored in business. Justin is enrolled at the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in the master's of divinity program.

## MS POSITIONS

**HARMONY BAPTIST CHURCH IN WALNUT, MS IS SEEKING RESUMES FOR A FULL-TIME PASTOR'S POSITION.** Resumes taken through July 15. Please mail to Bret Wooley, 520 CR 119, Walnut, MS 38683.

**TOPEKA BAPTIST CHURCH IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL MINISTER OF YOUTH.** Send Resumes to: 824 China Grove Rd., Jayess, MS 39641 or brodale54@bellsouth.net

**GOODWATER BAPTIST CHURCH IN MAGEE, MS IS SEEKING A PART-TIME YOUTH MINISTER.** Please send resume to Goodwater Baptist Church, 1313 Goodwater Rd NW, Magee, MS 39111. Attention: Youth Search Committee.

**WANTED FULL-TIME SECRETARY,** send resume to: FBC Wiggins, 219 N Second Street, Wiggins, MS 39677, or lisamrawls@bellsouth.net.

**ASHLAND BAPTIST CHURCH, IN ASHLAND, MS, IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL WORSHIP LEADER FOR SUNDAY SERVICES AND WEEKLY CHOIR PRACTICE.** EMAIL-CONTACT INFORMATION TO Ashlandbaptistchurch@yahoo.com OR CALL THE CHURCH OFFICE: 662-224-6473.

**NOXAPATER BAPTIST CHURCH, WINSTON ASSOCIATION IS PRAYERFULLY SEEKING A FULL-TIME MINISTER OF YOUTH AND EDUCATION.** If interested, please submit resume by emailing it to noxbaptist@noxapaterel.net or by mailing it to P.O. Box 251, Noxapater, MS 39346. ATTN: YMISC.

**INTERSTATE BAPTIST CHURCH IN SHAW MS IS LOOKING FOR A WORSHIP LEADER/CHOIR DIRECTOR.** Please send resumes to 1206 Avery St. Cleveland, MS 38732 or email to firemanfd124@gmail.com

## CLASSIFIEDS

**CHURCH FURNITURE FOR SALE:** Pulpit, Communion Table, 2 Pulpit Chairs and 6 pews (2 long approx. 20 ft., 4 - 10 1/2 ft.). Contact FBC Mendenhall at 601-847-2488 for more information.

**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF MILAN, TN IS PRAYERFULLY SEEKING A FULL-TIME CHILDREN'S DIRECTOR.** We are looking for someone who has a passionate desire to see children saved and is capable of helping them grow in the Spirit. After considering His will in prayer, please email resume to: ChildrensDirectorSearchTeam@yahoo.com

**FOR SALE:** Parkway Memorial Cemetery, Ridgeland, 2 adjoining spaces, Lot 46 Section A Sunset Gardens. 601-924-7407.

**CHURCH 15-PASSENGER BUS FOR SALE:** 2006 Eldorado Aerotech (Ford E-350 XLT), Mileage 56,485. Bids accepted through June 30; email desotochurch13@gmail.com or U.S. Mail to DeSoto Baptist Church, 62 Jasper Street, Shubuta, MS 39360, or call 601 776-6050 for more information. DeSoto Baptist Church reserves the right to reject any and all bids.

**REV. CHARLES TWEEDY MDIV, LIBERTY UNIVERSITY. 15 YEARS EXPERIENCE IN BI-VOCATIONAL AND FULL-TIME MINISTRY.** Available for supply preaching at area churches within the MS Baptist Convention. Contact: 601-297-2596; Email: charles.tweedy@icloud.com

**GATLINBURG RENTAL:** Cabin \$95/night. Contact: 832-922-0401 or Email: pdiwl760@att.net for information and booking.

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**PULPIT SUPPLY AVAILABLE:** Retired Southern Baptist Navy chaplain available for Sunday pulpit supply on short notice (pastor illness, vacation, rest, etc.). 100 mile radius of Hattiesburg. Member of Hardy Street Baptist Church. Graduate of New Orleans Baptist and Fuller Theological Seminaries. References available. Compensation unimportant. Contact him at 601-408-4608 or bennyhornsby.com

**STAINED GLASSWORKS, INC.,** serving MS & AL since 1992. Call 800-605-2970

**LEVY CHURCH, NORTH LITTLE ROCK, AR SEEKS A WORSHIP PASTOR.** Resumes/inquiries may be sent to steventiner@levybaptist.com

**WWW.SEBRENHOMEIMPROVEMENT.COM.** Christian owned Don & Rita Sebrén. 601-992-2092. All home improvements, siding, energy efficient windows, metal & shingle roofs, screen & sunrooms, patio covers, decks, room additions, kitchen & bath upgrades.

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## Bible Drills



**ANCHOR CHURCH, LAFAYETTE COUNTY,** congratulates drillers Breeze Hughes, Chaz Austin, and Mary Michael Swanson.



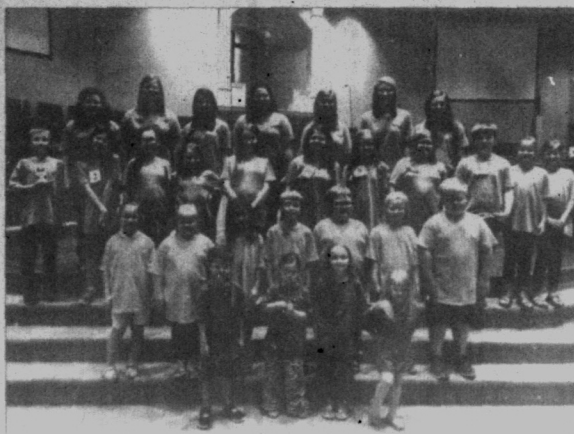
**CALVARY CHURCH, CLEVELAND,** recognizes its drillers. Mary Helen Kitrell, leader.



**BECKER CHURCH, BECKER,** recognizes its drillers and coaches: Debbie Edwards, Marley Edwards, Alana Edwards, Waylon Pender, Wyatt Pender, and Lisa Pender. Alana is a 9-year participant.



**FIRST CHURCH, TUPELO,** recognizes its children's Bible drillers.



**INGOMAR CHURCH, NEW ALBANY,** recognizes its drillers in the children's and youth drills. Terry Cutrer, pastor.



**CALVARY CHURCH, SILVER CREEK,** recognizes drillers Kaylee and Jacob Daughdrill with their leader Billie June Peeler. Kaylee scored Superior in state drills.

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## Revivals & Homecomings

► **Coldwater Church, Philadelphia:** Homecoming, June 11, 10:30 a.m.; Chris Sledge, speaker; Reuben and Fay Moore, music.

► **Bowlin Church, Sallis:** Homecoming, June 11, 11 a.m., followed by food and fellowship; Matt Steed, speaker.

## SUDAN

cont. from p. 1

return to their families after 17 months in detention," CSW chief executive Mervyn Thomas said. "However, their case highlights our profound concerns regarding the rule of law in Sudan and the politicization of the criminal justice system by the National Intelligence and Security Services, which pursued the case against them."

"We continue to call for the government to review and reform the powers of this body and to end the targeting of religious and ethnic minorities on spurious grounds."

Freedom for the pair ends a case that began in 2015 and involved two others who were previously released. SCOC head of missions Kwā (also spelled Kuwa) Shamaal and Czech aid worker Petr Jasek were both jailed on charges including espionage, waging war against the state, and gathering false news information, as well as inciting hatred between classes.

Shamaal was acquitted and released in January. Jasek received a presidential pardon in February.

The arrest of the four was related to their support of a financial campaign that raised \$5,000 for the medical care of Darfur student Ali Omer, injured and burned during a student demonstration in 2013, CSW said.

The government claimed the money was in reality support for rebel activity in the South Kordofan, Blue Nile, and Darfur regions.

"We welcome the release of Reverend [Abdelrahim] and Mr. Abdumawla, and are pleased they are finally able to return to their families after 17 months in detention. However, their case highlights our profound concerns regarding the rule of law in Sudan and the politicization of the criminal justice system by the National Intelligence and Security Services, which pursued the case against them."

**Mervyn Thomas**  
CSW chief executive

In its campaign against Christian churches, Sudan ordered in June, 2016 the destruction of at least 25 churches, claiming they were built on government-owned land or land zoned for residential or other uses.

Churches targeted include SCOC, Catholic, Coptic Orthodox, Jehovah's Witness, and Pentecostal congregations. Similarly-situated Muslim mosques have been allowed to remain standing, Christians told Morning Star.

"There is a nearby mosque in the area where the [Soba al Ared] SCOC church building was destroyed, but it was not demolished," Morning Star quoted an anonymous source as saying on May 8.

In late April, the Khartoum Bahri Administrative Court rejected a case brought jointly by the churches to have the demolition order overturned, CSW said.

On April 3, a member of the Bahri Evangelical Church was stabbed to death while peacefully demonstrating against government efforts to confiscate and sell the church and its school, according to reports.

Younan Abdullah, an elder of the church that is part of the Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church (SPREC), died of stab wounds, World Watch Monitor reported May 2. A second stabbed church member survived.

On April 26, police and an armed mob occupied the church compound and school, including houses and offices, MEC reported April 27. During the takeover, police arrested and detained for 12 hours the wife and three young children of SPREC guard Azhari Tamra while he was away from home.

The family's belongings were destroyed and they were not allowed to return to their home, MEC said.

The religious freedom advocacy group Open Doors ranks Sudan fifth on its 2017 World Watch List of countries with the most severe Christian persecution. Sudan has been a U.S. State Department Country of Particular Concern since 1999 because of its human rights violations and treatment of Christians.

*Editor's note: Photographs courtesy of Church Solidarity Worldwide.*

## Need a light?

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life." (John 8:12)

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

## OBITUARIES

**Joe Rendar Lovelady**, 86, long time Mississippi Baptist pastor and denominational worker, died May 30 at Oxford.



LOVELADY

Funeral service was June 2 at North Oxford Church with Carl Myers officiating. Burial followed in St. Peter's Cemetery in Oxford. Born in Oxford to the late Cornelius and Sophronia Lee Calloway Lovelady, Joe Lovelady was a retired attorney/guardian ad litem and a member of North Oxford Church where he taught Sunday School. He previously served as pastor of Mt. Zion Church in Oxford and pastor of Edgewater Church in New Orleans for 24 1/2 years. He was former president of the Rotary Club and the Kiwanis Club, both in Oxford, a member of the M Club at the University of Mississippi in Oxford, and established the Joe Lovelady Foundation. He was a veteran of the United States Air Force where he served as an intelligence specialist achieving the rank of staff sergeant. Survivors include his wife Betty Ruth Houston Lovelady of Oxford; son Joe Rendar "Rendy" Lovelady Jr. (Katharine) of Franklin, TN; brother Frank Lovelady of Oxford; and three grandchildren. For additional information and to sign an online guestbook, visit wallerfuner-

alhome.com. Waller Funeral Home in Oxford was in charge of arrangements.

**Harry H. Douglas**, 90, of Satartia, long-time pastor and denominational worker, died at his home on June 2. Born in Palatka, FL, on Aug. 14, 1926, he was the eldest son of the late Harry H. and Verdie Mae Douglas. He worked for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board for 32 years on the staff of Camp Garaywa (now Garaywa Camp and Conference Center) in Clinton. He was bivocational pastor of Rocky Springs, Lula, Hermanville, Bovina, Carpenter, and Deer Creek churches in Mississippi. He taught Sunday School at Pocahontas Church. A U.S. Navy veteran of WWII, he was preceded in death by his brothers Charles, Jack, Jerry, and John Douglas; sister Inez Seters, and son Wayne R. Douglas. He is survived by his wife of 70 years, Frances H. Douglas; children Dianne Belk (Freddie) of Satartia, Harvey E. Douglas (Delores) of Flora, Patty Shropshire (Doss) of Redwood, and Julie Peoples (Wendell) of Brandon; daughter-in-law Cathy Douglas of Tampa, FL; sisters Mary Tarver of Baton Rouge, La., and Nellie Gunter (Walter) of Satsuma, FL; 16 grandchildren, 27 great-grandchildren, and two great-great-grandchildren as well as numerous nieces and nephews. Memorial service was held June 6 at Pocahontas Church. Glenwood Funeral Home in Vicksburg was in charge of arrangements.

## BIBL i O C I P H E R

ZEDQADCFDTZVAZY AZ DCAF

HNXEAWN ZED, DCTD DCN FKAHADP

THN FOUXNWD OZDE MEO; UOD

HTDCNH HNXEAWN UNWTOFN MEOH

ZTGNF THN QHAODNZ AZ CNTLNZ.

SOBN DNZ: DQNZDM

Clue: O = U

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Daniel 6:22

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004. © 2005



## The Past • Psalm 78

The heading of this Psalm proves that it was written directly to me (and, well, maybe to you, too, hmm...?). "God's Guidance of His People in Spite of Their Unfaithfulness." Wow, I so MORE than qualify for that category of unfaithfulness. Just like the nation of Israel in the midst of multiple crises of life, I can manage to set aside any remembrance of the great, wonderful acts of our Mighty God. How quickly we forget to remember! Throughout biblical history (HIS-story), over and over again, God forgave the unforgivable of those who managed to forget the unforgettable.

The author of Psalm 78 is Asaph. He was descended from the tribe of Levi, the priestly tribe of Moses and Aaron. He was a worship leader appointed by David to serve in Jerusalem, first in the tabernacle and later in the temple. He was one of the singers and also played crashing cymbals. His name means collector or conveyor or one who gathers. In this Psalm, Asaph is collecting reasons for God to wipe folks off the face of the map. He makes a case for the greatness of God and the provision of God for His people throughout history from the Exodus to the reign of King David. Then, he describes how the people should have been ashamed to be ungratefully disobedient.

As my dad used to say, "...you should have known better than to act that way."

"Listen!" The first word of Psalm 78 is a commanding imperative. In the Gospels, Jesus would preface many of His messages with the words, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" This use of "listen" means to cup your hand behind your ear while you incline yourself (lean) close enough to gather in all the spoken truth you can receive. Don't miss one word of this ammunition of admonition.

There is a God story. Those of us who have had the privilege of receiving this message are responsible to live it out faithfully while passing it on to the next generation. God is good. Man is not. God came to make a way for His people in this wilderness of desperate lostness. As a co-poser and writer, one of my favorite verses of inspiration is Psalm 102:18 which reads, "This shall be written for the generations to come that a

people yet to be created may praise the Lord." Live on. Write on. Asaph spoke then wrote to remind us not to drop the faith baton.

Adam and the fall. Noah and the flood. Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and the birth of the Hebrew nation. Twelve sons of Jacob and the story of Joseph. Bondage in Egypt and the coming of Moses and plagues and the Exodus. God, the

Covenant Maker is the Covenant Keeper. The march through the Red Sea. Disobedience that results in a forty year journey

through the wilderness. God, the 24/7/365 GPS and Trail Guide, providing the cloud by day and the fire by night. Water poured from a rock. Quail rained from the sky. Manna settled every morning. God never fails to accomplish His part. Meanwhile, the people say, "No, Lord, let's have it OUR way!"

In Psalm 78, Asaph reminds us of God and His complete provision. His

strength. His power. His wondrous works. His laws. His compassion. His forgiveness. His faithfulness. His restrained anger time after time after time. The destruction of the enemies of the people of God. The inheritance of land and homes and villages and crops in Canaan as they moved from the leadership of Moses and then Joshua. God did His part in fulfillment of covenant.

Meanwhile, the people continue their pattern of disobedience and unfaithfulness. They forgot His mighty deeds. They refused to obey the laws of God. They were ungrateful for water and quail and manna. They grieved God. They rebelled against God. They brought pain to the heart of God. At full speed with blinders on, they passed over The Lord of Passover!

Ezra, the priest (see Ezra 7:10) "set his heart" on the study of the word of the Lord to practice and teach it. These chose to ignore it. Psalm 78:8 reveals they did not prepare (set) their hearts toward God. Bound for eternity, we must choose to remember God's faithfulness in the past while living our lives as offerings of faithful gratitude to Him in the present.

Brown is staff evangelist, First Church, Richland.



### Explore the Bible

with Becky Brown

## Forge True Friendship • 1 Samuel 18:1-4, 19:4-7, 20:10-13

Who is your best friend? Yes, spouses fit that role but outside of them, who is it you call in times of need? To our fault, men do not lend themselves naturally to more than surface level friendships. Yet for me there is this one friend who is closer than a brother (Prov. 18:24). When faced with my son's illness, he has prayed. When my family faced wounds from the ministry, he was faithful. We have vacationed together as families, spent holidays together and have even worked in the crawl space of my home in 170 weather. I rest in knowing that his love for my family means that my wife and sons will be looked after if something happens to me and vice versa. His love for God is evident through his love for me.

David understood such a friendship. From the time he faced Goliath until the day he ascended the throne, David discovered and developed a covenant friendship with Jonathan. This covenant relationship was purely Plutonic in nature and perfect for defining a covenant relationship for men and women in today's society. In case you are wondering, covenant friendships are fairly easy to develop.

### Put the other person first (1 Sam. 18:1-4)

Prior to battling Goliath, David speaks to King Saul and the description of his

trust in God makes a lasting impression on Jonathan. The text says that Jonathan's soul was "knit" to David's. Meaning in this young shepherd, Jonathan had found someone whom he could relate to, trust in and serve alongside of for they shared a trust in God.

To show his new "soul brother" the depth of his love, Jonathan takes his own battle armaments and gives them to David. David's trust was in God but his support would come from his friend (vs. 4). Even at a great personal cost, Jonathan put the needs of his friend before his own. That is what true friendship does.

### Stand up for the other person (1 Sam. 19:4-7)

The word advocate is a legal term. It is an action taken by a representative in a court of law. An attorney advocates for someone facing legal issues. This action is taken by Jonathan on David's behalf but not before a judge. Jonathan speaks

up for an innocent David before his own father King Saul. Such is the love that Jonathan has that he is willing to stand up against a sovereign for his friend. Moreover, he is standing up against his own father for David's sake.

As believers, you and I have experienced such a gift in Christ as He too stands before a rightful King and Judge and pleads our case. 1 John 2:1 says that we have an advocate in Christ Jesus pleading our cause, yet in our case we cannot plead our innocence as sinners. We can only rely on our guiltless Savior. We have no truer friend.

### Outlast the other person (1 Sam. 20:10-13)

At this point in the story David has fallen out with King Saul. There is a concern between the two friends that trouble is brewing against David. With words of assurance, Jonathan tells David of his intent to speak to his father and upon the threat of death defend David before the

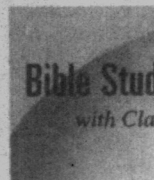
king. In other words, if David was to face death it would be over Jonathan's dead body. Jonathan's promise was for David to outlast him. Jonathan would give his words and even his life in order for David to live.

### Live It Out

Can we relate? Is there a friend to be named that places our welfare first? Do we have one that defends us against a wrath filled future? Can you think of One that has given all that He can in order for you and I to live? Can we take the challenge to tell others about our truest friend and Savior? Perhaps even the person named by the first question I asked you above?

In Matthew 19:11, with His own mouth, Jesus expresses precisely what a true friend is. He is a friend to sinners. Reflecting on my own life, those words are of great comfort. Thinking about the truth that all people are sinners before God, those words are a great challenge to anyone who loves missions. Pray in your small group for the millions across the globe that have no knowledge of this true friend.

Anthony is director of the Collaborative Missionary Network, Oxford/Holly Springs.



### Bible Studies for Life

with Clay Anthony

## DISRUPTION

cont. from p. 1

teens being hurt. It is also about finding common ground around our children and youth."

SBC Executive Committee representative Roger S. Oldham, vice president for convention communications and relations

for the SBC Executive Committee, expressed optimism that the FIA activities will be conducted lawfully and its representatives responded to cordially.

"We anticipate representatives of FIA will abide by the city of Phoenix's guidelines for their planned assembly," said Oldham, "We also anticipate that messengers to the SBC annual

meeting who choose to participate in conversations with representatives of FIA will do so with the same cordial spirit of Christian witness they have shown in similar settings in times past."

Pro-LGBT advocacy groups have protested at previous SBC annual meetings, including outcries in 2000, 2001, 2002, and

in 2011 when the event was last held in Phoenix.

Southern Baptists have affirmed in many resolutions the application of Scripture regarding homosexual lifestyles and the church's proper treatment of those who engage in LGBT lifestyles.

"Southern Baptists are on record opposing bullying of

any kind, including those who struggle with sexual identity issues," Oldham said. "We believe all people bear the image of God and should be treated with dignity and respect."

"We also believe God's image in us has been marred by sin and is only restored when we enter a saving relationship with God through Jesus Christ as Lord."

# Planned Parenthood abortion rate increases

WASHINGTON (BP) — The latest Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) annual report again demonstrates abortion is a priority and federal defunding should be the result, pro-life leaders say.

Released in late May, the organization's 2015-2016 report showed the country's largest abortion provider performed about 4,300 more of the lethal procedures than the previous year. At the same time, Planned Parenthood reported a decline in such services as prenatal care and breast exams — services the organization claims are its main focus.

The report showed PPFA affiliates performed 328,348 abortions for the year. In 2014-2015, the country's leading abortion provider reported 323,999 of the procedures.

During the year ending June 30, 2016, PPFA and its affiliates received \$554.6 million in grants and reimbursements from the federal and other levels of government. That was an increase of about \$900,000 from the previous year.

The annual report's bottom line reflects that the nonprofit continued to prosper financially, reaching \$1.4 billion in total revenue.

"This report reveals what is already plain to see: Planned Parenthood is not and has never been a 'health care' organization," Russell Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) in Nashville told Baptist Press in a written statement. "It is a storefront that preys upon women in crisis, exploits families, and devalues human life."

"This report reveals what is already plain to see: Planned Parenthood is not and has never been a 'health care' organization. It is a storefront that preys upon women in crisis, exploits families, and devalues human life. It exists not to serve women but to drive profit margins in an industry of death."

**Russell Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission**

"It exists not to serve women but to drive profit margins in an industry of death. I pray that lawmakers would recognize this gross injustice and show their care for women and children by directing federal monies toward community health centers that actually serve women, not exploit them."

The new report shows that in terms of pregnancy outcomes, Planned Parenthood's nearly exclusive focus on abortion continues, according to Chuck Donovan, president of the Charlotte Lozier Institute, in a June 1 article for National Review.

"Unborn children identified at [Planned Parenthood] affiliate clinics still have a lower than four percent chance of emerging alive," he said.

The Charlotte Lozier Institute is the education and research arm of the pro-life Susan B. Anthony List headquartered in Washington, D.C.

Arina G. Jessu, director of the Center for Human Dignity at the Family Research Council in Washington, D.C., said in written comments, "The bottom line is that Planned Parenthood is getting more government funding and committing more abortions

than ever before, while continuing to decrease in key services to women such as cancer screenings, breast exams, and prenatal services."

She added, "The time to defund Planned Parenthood is now. It's time to redirect the funds to community health centers that provide comprehensive and holistic care to women and their children."

Congressional supporters of the defunding effort are seeking to use a health care bill or other legislation to cut most of Planned Parenthood's federal funding and direct it to federally qualified health centers that do not perform abortions. The ERLC is conducting an online advertising campaign to rally support for federal defunding of the organization.

Backing for the defunding effort in Congress has grown in response to the latest scandal to mar Planned Parenthood's reputation. A series of undercover videos first released in 2015 provided evidence Planned Parenthood was trading in body parts from aborted babies, and a video issued online shortly before the unveiling of PPFA's annual report further tarnished its public image.

The 2015-2016 report by the Planned Parenthood Fed-

eration of America (PPFA) showed its affiliates performed 328,348 abortions for the year. In 2014-2015, the country's leading abortion provider reported 323,999 of the procedures.

During the year ending June 30, 2016, PPFA and its affiliates received \$554.6 million in grants and reimbursements from the federal and other levels of government. That was an increase of about \$900,000 from the previous year.

The report also showed:

■ Prenatal services at nearly 650 PPFA centers declined from 17,419 in 2014-2015 to 9,419 in 2015-2016.

■ Breast exams decreased from 363,803 to 321,700. (This line in the 2014-2015 report was labeled, Breast Exams/Breast Care.)

Adoption referrals increased from 2,024 to 2,889 — but still paled in comparison to the number of abortions.

One positive note gleaned from the annual report: PPFA centers distributed 767,830 emergency contraception kits in 2015-2016 after providing 931,589 the year before.

Emergency contraceptives, such as Plan B, not only can restrict ovulation in a woman or prevent fertilization, but can block implantation of the early embryo in the uterine wall. The latter effect would cause an abortion, pro-life advocates point out.

Planned Parenthood, which celebrated its 100th anniversary last year, came into existence when eugenicist Margaret Sanger opened a Brooklyn birth control clinic in 1916. It took the lead in the abortion business in this country when a New York affiliate began performing the procedures in 1970. New York legalized abortion that year, three years before the U.S. Supreme Court struck down all state bans on the procedure.

## Q. HOW DOES ABUSE AFFECT SPIRITUALITY?

Join us at The Church for Children's Training to learn how to become part of the solution. With 150,000 children and counting on you.

## Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

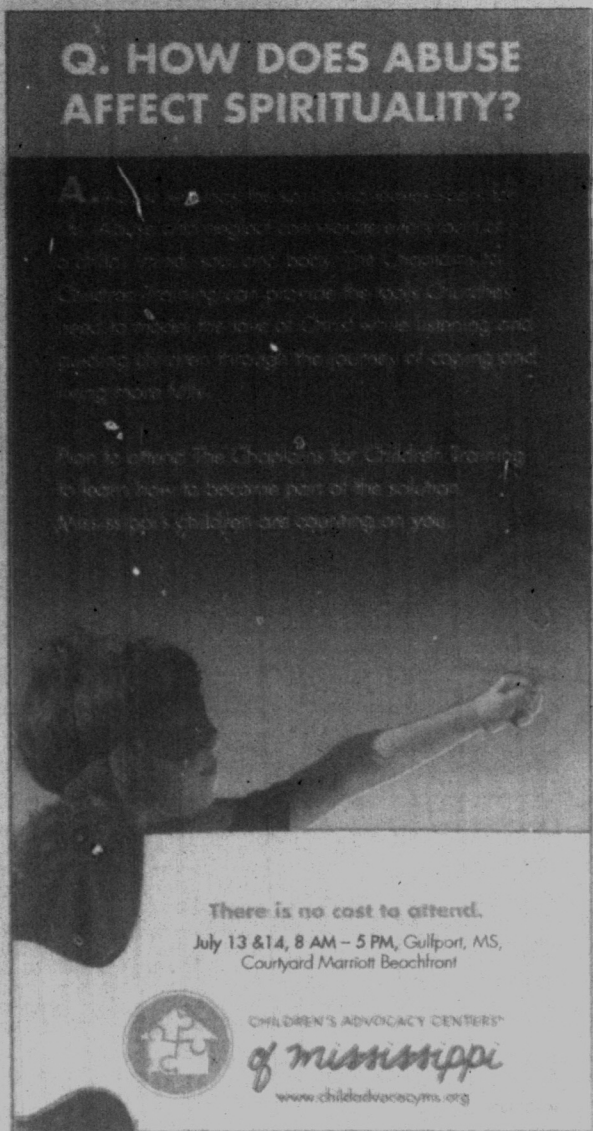
Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically

via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. **Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted.** Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530, FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: [baptist\\_record@mbcb.org](mailto:baptist_record@mbcb.org).



There is no cost to attend.  
July 13 & 14, 8 AM - 5 PM, Gulfport, MS,  
Courtyard Marriott Beachfront

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